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Students Would Pay for Rec Bldg.

By Alex Lang
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Students are going to have to ante up in order for a new recreation center to be built at the UI.

The main funding for the center will be provided by students' recreation fees. The fee will be approximately \$80 a semester, up from the \$4 currently charged. The other major portion of the funding for the complex would come from the Athletics Department.

Brailsford & Dunlavey Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm, conducted a survey and found that students wanted a new recreation center and would be willing to pay more in student fees to have it built, Recreation Services Committee member Chris Turner told the Faculty Council at Tuesday's meeting.

Harry Ostrander, the director of Recreational Services, said Brailsford & Dunlavey's preliminary report found students wanted a recreation center to complement the Field House, a choice that would have involved less of a raise in student fees. Ostrander said the committee must now decide if a small facility is what students want or if they chose it because it was cheaper.

"We have a very poor recreation facility compared with other Big Ten universities," Turner said.

Plans for the new recreation center would include a pool for the UI's swim teams, which is the reason the Athletics Department would be willing to help pay for the complex, Turner said. Athletics officials could not be reached for comment.

Besides a swimming pool, the plans for the center have not been set. The location will most likely be on the East Side of campus; the exact location has yet to be determined.

Several possibilities are located near the IMU and would include underground tunnels to the IMU and contain social gathering areas as well as athletics areas. One area highly unlikely to be used is the parking lot of the English-Philosophy Building, Ostrander said.

"Where the site will be is crucial to the East Side of the campus," said German Professor Judith Aikin at the council's meeting. Some of the proposed locations would be better suited for new academic buildings, she said.

She would also like to see more student participation in deciding the future of the new recreation center, she said.

"What we really need still is going to be an east-campus facility," Turner said.

One concern raised was that the Athletics Department will not be able to fund its portion of the

complex - a problem the university ran into a few years ago. There were plans to build an athletics complex next to the Hawkeye Hall of Fame, but the Athletics Department was unable to pay its half of the \$38 million price tag.

However, this allowed the Recreation Committee to review the plan for the center, further deciding the location would not serve the needs of the students, Turner said.

The current time frame is for the state Board of Regents to approve the final plans for the recreation center in 2005-06.